

7th Sunday After Pentecost

[Genesis 25.19-34](#)

[Psalms 119.105-112](#)

[Romans 8.1-11](#)

[Matthew 13.1-9; 13.18-23](#)

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Under the Dark Soil

Today, in the ordinary rhythm of the Church's year, Jesus gives us a handful of earth and seed. A sower goes out. Seed scatters: over the beaten path, into stony ground, among thorn and bramble, and into good dark soil. It is a simple picture, but like rain on dry ground, it sinks deep. It speaks of God, of us, and of the quiet ways grace takes root.

At first glance, the sower seems wonderfully careless. If this were a business plan, someone would call a meeting. If this were a parish strategy document, someone might ask for clearer outcomes. But the Gospel does not begin with scarcity or calculation. The sower is the point. God is not cautious with grace. God is not stingy with mercy. God flings life like seed on the wind.

That is good news, because most of us are not one kind of soil all the time. Some days we are open and ready. Some days we are hard-packed by fear. Some days our roots are shallow. Some days the thorns grow thick: distraction, cynicism, ambition, conflict, anxious headlines, and the endless noise of the world pressing at the door.

Genesis tells us this is nothing new. Esau comes in from the field famished, and Jacob turns hunger into leverage. It is an ancient family story, but it still has dust on its feet. We know a world where fear and need are used against people; where hunger, violence, displacement, and the pressure to survive can make neighbours into rivals.

Closer to home, the same struggle comes more quietly. We guard our time, our attention, our compassion, our hope. We measure love before we give it. We ask whether it will work, whether it will be noticed, whether it will bear fruit quickly enough.

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So let us hear Paul's word from Romans as fresh water: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation for small faith, mixed motives, failed attempts, or cautious hearts. In Christ, by the Spirit, mercy comes before judgement. We are forgiven, renewed, and drawn into the wide, green life of God.

That is the shape of the Church's common life. We are not anxious managers of grace; we are receivers and bearers of it. In Scripture, prayer, silence and the deep communion we share in Christ, God keeps sowing the word in us and among us. The seed is not merely an idea to be understood. It is life to be received.

And here is the quiet promise: the word of God travels. Grace is not confined to one place, one moment, or one kind of gathering. The seed lands in kitchens and bedrooms, beside glowing screens, in tired hearts, in ordinary days. Christ is present in word and prayer, in stillness and longing, in spiritual communion, and in the ordinary made holy.

And this matters as we gather together, digitally and spiritually. Like lamps in different windows, we are joined by the Spirit: listening for Christ's voice, holding one another in prayer, and trusting God to work within us, drawing us into abundant life.

Psalm 119 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Not a floodlight. Not the whole road. A lamp. Enough light for the next step. Enough light on the path to walk by.

Discipleship is often just that: receiving grace, attending to Christ, and taking the next faithful step.

Maybe the next step is a word of peace where contempt has taken root. Maybe it is generosity when fear says, "hold back." Maybe it is prayer for those caught in war and disaster, and one small act of mercy rising from that prayer. Maybe it is refusing to use another person's need as leverage. Maybe it is offering stew without strings attached.

And maybe the next step is letting God loosen the hard ground in us: suspicion, defensiveness, the need to control the harvest, the quiet belief that love only matters when results appear quickly.

The parable does not ask us to master the field. It asks us to trust the sower.

Because growth is often hidden. Seeds do not ask permission before sprouting. Grace may be working underground: in the unanswered prayer, the strained relationship, the kindness that seems wasted, the heart changing where no one can see. Under the dark soil, life is stirring.

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So this week, let us be gentle with the ground—our own and one another's. Let us refuse the lie that love is wasted when it is not noticed or returned. Let us become a people shaped by prayer, reverence, mercy, hospitality, and hope: scattered like seed, gathered in Christ.

The sower is still sowing. The lamp is still shining. The Spirit is still breathing life. So may we receive the seed, take the next faithful step, and scatter love with holy abandon, as the word takes root in us and bears fruit for the life of the world.

Amen